For Week Ending November 23, 2012 (none for weeks ending 11/2, 11/9, 11/16)

Counselor and Coordinator Announcements:

1. **Pink reassignment correction letters:** Some number of Colorado residents may be receiving PINK letters from CMS, instructing them to ignore the BLUE reassignment letter they received. This correction applies to beneficiaries who were incorrectly enrolled into a different insurance company when they should have been reassigned within their current plan's parent organization. If information can be obtained about how many Colorado beneficiaries may be receiving these, it will be shared in these weekly updates.

2. **NCOA guide to mailings and action required:** NCOA has produced an excellent guide to mailings, key events, and what action is required by beneficiaries. It is available for download at https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prescription-Drug-Coverage/LimitedIncomeandResources/Downloads/11628.pdf

3. **Part A & B premiums for 2013 announced:**

	2012	**2013**	**Addl. Info**
Part A premium	$451	$441	most don't pay this
Part A deductible	$1156	$1184	per benefit period
Part B premium	$99.90	$104.90	unless income over $85,000/$170,000

Part B deductible	$140	$147	per year

4. **Social Security office hours reduction:** Social Security field offices will begin closing 30 minutes earlier, effective immediately. Beginning in January, they will also close at noon on Wednesdays. When you send a consumer to SSA in person, BE SURE TO TELL THEM OF THIS CHANGE! Many functions can be performed on line at www.socialsecurity.gov.

5. **Benzodiazepines and barbiturates coverage – transition guidance:** Starting in 2013 Part D plans are required to cover benzos, and barbiturates used to treat epilepsy, cancer and certain MH disorders. CMS sent guidance to plans with special transition consideration: they are to consider claims during the first 90 days of 2013 to be continuing therapy, given that there will be no claims history in place. In upcoming updates, information about how consumers will or should have access in light of this will be clarified.

6. **Medicaid quiz:** Kaiser Family Foundation has posted several quizzes that designed to help people expand their knowledge of health policy issues. See the Medicaid, Medicare, Uninsured, and other quizzes at http://www.kff.org/kff_quiz.cfm.

7. **Last two weeks:** We are entering the last two weeks of open enrollment. December 7 is the last day for the annual open enrollment. Remember, there are additional enrollment opportunities for those: choosing a 5 star plan, disenrolling from their Medicare Advantage plan, whose plans are non-renewing, and for those eligible for Extra Help.

Five weeks down, two to go! I will be checking with coordinators in the coming week to see how call volumes are going and what the turn-around time is for returning calls. Feel free to contact me if you have concerns.

Alice

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